

Whereas despite the reduction in violence in Iraq in recent years, serious threats to religious freedom remain, including religiously motivated violence directed at vulnerable religious minorities, their leaders, and their holy sites, including Chaldeans, Syrians, Assyrians, Armenians and other Christians, Sabeans, Mandeans, Yazidis, Baha'is, Kaka'is, Jews, and Shi'a Shabak;

Whereas the March 2010 Report on Human Rights issued by the Department of State identifies "insurgent and extremist violence, coupled with weak government performance in upholding the rule of law" resulting in "widespread and severe human rights abuses" as among the significant and continuing human rights problems in Iraq;

Whereas although violence has impacted all aspects of society in Iraq, there have been alarming levels of religiously motivated violence in Iraq in recent years;

Whereas the United States Commission on International Religious Freedom continues to recommend that the Secretary of State designate Iraq as a "country of particular concern" under the International Religious Freedom Act of 1998, because of the systematic, ongoing, egregious violations of religious freedom in Iraq;

Whereas scores of holy sites in Iraq have been bombed since 2004;

Whereas members of small religious minority communities in Iraq do not have militia or tribal structures to defend them, often receive inadequate official protection, and are legally, politically, and economically marginalized;

Whereas in the Nineveh and Kirkuk governorates, where control is disputed between the Government of Iraq and the Kurdistan regional government, religious minorities have been targeted for abuse, violence, and discrimination;

Whereas before 1951, non-Muslims comprised some 6 percent of the population of Iraq, with Jews as the oldest and largest of these communities, tracing back to the Babylonian captivity of the sixth century BCE, but today the Jewish community in Iraq numbers in the single digits and essentially lives in hiding;

Whereas religious minorities in Iraq, who made up about 3 percent of the population of Iraq in 2003, make up a disproportionately high percentage of registered Iraqi refugees;

Whereas the number of Christians in Iraq was approximately 1,400,000 according to the 1987 Iraqi census but, according to the 2009 Report on International Religious Freedom issued by the Department of State, may now number only 500,000 to 600,000;

Whereas the United States is gravely concerned about the viability of the indigenous Christian communities of Iraq and other religious minority communities, and the possible disappearance of their ancient languages, culture, and heritage;

Whereas the Sabeans, Mandeans community in Iraq reports that almost 90 percent of its members have fled Iraq, leaving only about 3,500 to 5,000 Mandeans in Iraq as of 2009;

Whereas the Baha'i faith, estimated to have fewer than 2,000 adherents in Iraq, remains prohibited in Iraq under a 1970 law;

Whereas although hundreds of thousands of Iraqi refugees and internally displaced persons have returned to their areas of origin, the numbers of religious minority returnees to Iraq are disproportionately low; and

Whereas members of religious minority communities of Iraq in diaspora have organized to support their communities in Iraq in ways that also benefit the whole of Iraq society by encouraging the rule of law, enhanced security, employment, education and health services: Now therefore be it

NOTICE OF HEARING

IMPEACHMENT TRIAL COMMITTEE ON THE ARTICLES AGAINST JUDGE G. THOMAS PORTEOUS, JR.

Mrs. MCCASKILL. Mr. President, I wish to announce that the Impeachment Trial Committee on the Articles Against Judge G. Thomas Porteous, Jr. will meet each day from September 13-17, at 8 a.m., to conduct a hearing.

For further information regarding this meeting, please contact Erin Johnson at 202-228-4133.

AUTHORITY FOR COMMITTEES TO MEET

COMMITTEE ON ARMED SERVICES

Mr. BAUCUS. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Committee on Armed Services be authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on August 5, 2010, at 9:30 a.m.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

COMMITTEE ON BANKING, HOUSING, AND URBAN AFFAIRS

Mr. BAUCUS. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs be authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on August 5, 2010, at 10:30 a.m., to conduct a hearing entitled "The Obama Administration Manufacturing Agenda."

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

COMMITTEE ON FINANCE

Mr. BAUCUS. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Committee on Finance be authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on August 5, 2010, immediately following the 11:20 a.m. vote on the Senate floor, in the President's Room, S-216 of the Capitol.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN RELATIONS

Mr. BAUCUS. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Committee on Foreign Relations be authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on August 5, 2010, at 10:30 a.m.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

COMMITTEE ON ENERGY AND NATURAL RESOURCES

Mr. BAUCUS. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources be authorized to meet during the session of the Senate to conduct a business meeting on August 5, 2010 at 9:30 a.m., in room SD-366 of the Dirksen Senate Office Building.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

COMMITTEE ON THE JUDICIARY

Mr. BAUCUS. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Committee on the Judiciary be authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on August 5, 2010, at 10 a.m., in SD-226 of the Dirksen Senate Office Building, to conduct an executive business meeting.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

COMMITTEE ON VETERANS' AFFAIRS

Mr. BAUCUS. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Committee on Veterans' Affairs be authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on August 5, 2010, at 9:30 a.m. to conduct a markup on pending legislation. The Committee will meet in room 418 of the Russell Senate Office Building beginning at 9:30 a.m.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

PRIVILEGES OF THE FLOOR

Mr. KAUFMAN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that Jacqueline Hyatt, Jordan Franklin, and Lara Christensen from Senator BINGAMAN's office be granted floor privileges for today, August 5, 2010.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mr. SCHUMER. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that Liz Saxe, Katharine McFarland, David Zayas, and Miles Clark, law clerks on the Judiciary Committee staff of Senator LEAHY, and Avi Zevin and Jacquelyn Stanley, law clerks on my Judiciary Committee staff, be granted the privileges of the floor for the remainder of the debate on the nomination of Elena Kagan to be Associate Justice for the U.S. Supreme Court.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Without objection, it is so ordered.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

EXECUTIVE CALENDAR

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to executive session to consider en bloc Calendar Nos. 959, 960, 1003, 1004, 1005, 1012, 1013, 1014, 1015, 1016, 1017, 1018, 1094, 1095, 1096, 1097, 1098, 1099, 1100 and 1101; that the nominations be confirmed en bloc; that the motions to reconsider be considered made and laid upon the table en bloc; that any statements relating to the nominations be printed in the RECORD; and that the President of the United States be immediately notified of the Senate's action.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

The nominations were considered and confirmed, as follows:

DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE

Cathy Jo Jones, of Ohio, to be United States Marshall for the Southern District of Ohio.

Edward L. Stanton, III, of Tennessee, to be United States Attorney for the Western District of Tennessee for the term of four years.

Stephen R. Wigginton, of Illinois, to be United States Attorney for the Southern District of Illinois for the term of four years.